

Section 11

Local Planning Recommendations

While the District has prepared the Water Supply and Water Conservation Plan (WS Plan), it will be implemented by the local jurisdictions that own and operate the water systems. Local jurisdictions need to integrate the WS Plan into their own master plans. While most of the local jurisdictions have ongoing water management planning efforts, the efforts and details vary widely within the District. Following the framework and goals established by the District, planning at the local level is necessary to refine the WS Plan and to address specific local needs. Where flexibilities are included in the WS Plan, it is the local jurisdictions' responsibility to evaluate the options and to determine their benefits and costs.

Develop Local Water Management Plans

Because the WS Plan is regional in breadth, it covers a wide range of topics. The specifics will need to be developed and/or refined at the local level by the jurisdictions impacted by the WS Plan. Preparation of local plans is both an opportunity to demonstrate conformance with the WS Plan and to provide improvements and innovations to the WS Plan, based on a more in-depth analysis of local circumstances and factors. Local jurisdictions should develop water management plans that, at a minimum, conform to the goals of the core principles of the WS Plan to insure that water services are developed cost effectively, with a long-term regional perspective that provides good customer service.

The following describes the actions required to implement the recommendations associated with developing local water management plans.

Local Planning Action No. 1 - Develop local water management plans.

Local water management plans will be needed to support proposed infrastructure improvements to the water management system. In some cases, the current local plan will align with the WS Plan, and no revisions will be needed. In other cases, the current plan will need to be revised to incorporate the District's core principles. The purpose of local water management plans is to refine the WS Plan by addressing local and site-specific issues. The relationships and methods used to develop the Service Delivery Strategies, required by House Bill 489, may be useful in developing local water plans. It is expected that the local governments will take the initiative in developing these plans.

At times, new local water management plans will need to be developed to address proposed inter-jurisdictional projects. These jurisdictions include the county, cities within the county, neighboring counties, and water and wastewater authorities, if different. Benefits to neighboring jurisdictions will only occur if local plans are well coordinated. The District can provide a facilitation role for inter-jurisdictional cooperation, if needed.

The management plans should address water supply, water treatment, water transmission and distribution, water conservation, and reuse. The plans should include a water master plan with a minimum planning horizon of 30 years. The plans should project future growth and indicate the schedule for infrastructure improvements. Local governments, utilities, and authorities can use these plans to describe interim measures necessary to transition from now through 2030. Where changes to service areas are recommended, local plans that are coordinated with neighboring jurisdictions can investigate options and compare alternatives, if needed, to determine cost-effective, long-term solutions. Flexibility in implementation is achievable by presenting effective local plans that meet District goals. In general, the local plans should be updated every five years as the WS Plan is updated.

The water, wastewater, and watershed/stormwater management planning efforts also should be integrated at the local level, according to the recommendations in the District plans.

Water Supply, Conservation, and Reuse Management

In addition to the existing and potential water supply sources included in the WS Plan, flexibility exists for local governments to evaluate potential water supply sources outside the District. However, water systems located in the Chattahoochee and Etowah River Basins must consider downstream impacts and must follow the terms and limits as proposed in the Tri-State Compacts. The District and EPD must evaluate the impacts on water allocation for variances from the WS Plan.

Implementation of water conservation and reuse programs should be refined on a local level based on the recommended District programs. Due to the differences in current conservation levels, the local water conservation plan can specify required future conservation programs and define an implementation schedule according to local needs and resources.

Coordination between water and wastewater planning is essential in the implementation of water reuse programs. The local wastewater master plan should include detailed studies in wastewater treatment technologies, quantities, quality, and permitting requirements for the recommended indirect potable water reuse program.

Water Treatment Facilities

The local plan will go one step further than the District WS Plan in refining the water treatment plant expansion details. Based on the framework developed in the District WS Plan, local water systems should develop water treatment expansion master plans that define the number, location, and capacities of water treatment facilities, and their implementation schedule. A life cycle cost analysis should be used to compare different expansion scenarios. Water treatment technologies, residuals handling, and management issues also should be included as part of the master planning.

Distribution System and Interconnections Facilities

Each county and water system should conduct detailed hydraulic modeling and studies to determine the overall distribution system improvements required to meet the projected 2030 demands. The local plan should define its interconnection reliability target according to the recommended District formula, as discussed in Section 10, and use it as one of the planning criteria. The local plan also should evaluate other distribution system factors affecting reliability, including finished water storage, distribution system pipe conditions, and existing interconnection capability. Once the required improvements are defined, a schedule for transitioning to year 2030 can be developed.

Drought and Emergency Plans

As part of the local water supply management plan, each water system should determine its reliable supplies during a critical drought. The critical drought should have a minimum occurrence frequency of fifty years, or as severe as the five-year drought (1998-2003) Georgia has just experienced. Each water system also needs to prepare or update its emergency plan to incorporate detailed steps required to modify system operations for accepting or sharing water with connecting water systems. This was discussed in details in “Interconnections Action No. 3” in Section 10. Water use restrictions and required conservation measures in the local drought contingency plan should be revised to reflect the potential supplies available from new interconnections, if any. Local drought contingency plans should be updated to incorporate the permanent odd-even day outdoor water restrictions recently approved by the Board of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (March 2003).

Table 11-1 summarizes the essential elements that a local water plan should include in the future. In addition to traditional components, regional elements should be incorporated based on the recommendations in the WS Plan.

**Table 11-1
Local Water Planning Elements**

Traditional	Regional
Demand Supply Service Area Treatment Transmission and Distribution Capital Improvement Plans	System Interconnections Water Conservation Water Reuse Drought Planning Emergency Planning Coordination with Wastewater and Watershed Plans Public Education and Awareness Activities

Local Planning Action No. 2 - Review local plans for consistency with District Plan.

Local jurisdictions should develop local water supply plans that, at a minimum, conform to the core principles of the WS Plan. EPD issue permits based on the local plans’ consistency with the WS Plan, pursuant to Chapter 12-5-584, Section 1, Senate Bill 130:

“Local governments within the District shall implement the provisions of the district plans **that apply to them...** Upon the district’s approval of the plan, **the director may modify all existing permits... to make them consistent with the plan.**” (emphasis added)